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Determining the basis for continuation of a department of vocational agriculture.

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DETERMINING THE BASIS FOR CONTINUATION OF A DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE

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A Problem Study

DETERMINING THE BASIS FOR CONTINUATION OF A DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE

by

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G. C. B.

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INTRODUCTION

This problem has presented itself to me as teacher of Vocational Agriculture in Williams High School, Stockbridge, Massachusetts. The success or failure of this department is my responsibility. For many years I have had occasional doubts about the soundness of the existence of a department in this particular location; therefore, I am trying to discover all of the basic facts in the case, and to draw conclusions from the facts.

The approach to the problem is to gather all available statistics concerning local agriculture, from census, assessor's, and animal inspector's reports; to determine any trends in the agriculture of the area; to find out the industrial trends, if any, in the two towns; population changes as to number and character; to ascertain any changes in land tenure, and how they may affect agriculture as a business. These factors, coupled with the school population figures for the two towns, should show the basis for a department of vocational agriculture as regards farming, land tenure, and school attendance.

BENEFITS from the solution of this problem will be that I shall know the economic and social basis for this department. If its continuation seems feasible good! If not, the school committee may better use the appropriation in some other manner.

NO SUCH STUDY PREVIOUSLY MADE. To my best knowledge no such study of the area has ever been made. The department of vocational agriculture was established in the summer of 1936. I came on the job in September, after the students had been enrolled and classes started. I have tried to do what could be done with the students who have been available, and I

have tried to help them fit into the situation as found, but my best successes have come with boys from outlying towns - West Stockbridge, Richmond, Egremont, Tyringham - not the home town boys. This difference I attribute to a better chance to become established in agriculture in the outlying towns. With such a background I think it is time to make an objective study of the facts.

MY OBJECTIVE, then, is to discover all available facts concerning the economic and social background for this department of vocational agriculture, and to interpret these facts in the light of the question, "Should the department of vocational agriculture in Williams High School be continued?" Doubtless the most effective method of getting facts would be to canvas the whole area, to get first-hand information from personal contacts and interviews, but, because of the exigencies of time and travel, I am compelled to use facts that are available in published form. I believe that the data taken from census reports, assessor's summaries, and animal inspector's reports, together with information from school enrollment summaries, will give me a comprehensive background of facts. This information will be supplemented by my personal observation over a period of nine years in the area. From these sources I shall show the Population Changes from 1895 to 1945, and the School Population for the same period. This will show any trends in population change for the area and school attendance. As a measure of agricultural production I have taken the Number of Milk Cows and Total Cattle, Numbers of Swine and Sheep. These four items cover all of our most important farm production. As a supplement to this information I am presenting the history of the development of the estates in Stockbridge, which contributes little to the production picture, but has a pronounced effect on farming possibilities.

All of these data are to be presented in tabular form, with the data for each town separate and in total for both towns. This treatment of the data leads to a better understanding of the problem than could be achieved from the presentation of only the total figures for the area.

THE SCHOOL POPULATION

THE SCHOOL POPULATION of Williams High School is made up mostly of the children of working people. There are representatives of nearly all groups that have entered the American melting pot. There are a few Polish families, who came originally to work in the textile mill at Housatonic. The students from Stockbridge spring from English, Scotch, Dutch, Irish, Polish, and a few Italian families. The students coming from West Stockbridge represent all of these groups, but the largest number is second- or third-generation Italian-Americans. We have a very few negroes in our schools. The attitudes of all our students are conditioned by the employment possibilities open to them over the years. For a long period, dating back to the early nineteenth century, the young people of Stockbridge have gone out into the world to make their fortunes. A few have come back here to live late in life; most of them have stayed away. This is due to the very limited economic possibilities which are open to the young people of our town. Very few Stockbridge boys want to become farmers. They would like to run an estate, or maybe operate a farm for a gentleman farmer. Part of the reason for this attitude is that there have been very few opportunities for young men to buy desirable farm property here during the past eighty or ninety years. Nearly all of the most desirable land has been consolidated into the large estates, owned by gentlemen farmers or absentee owners.

Many of these estate owners have died, leaving their properties idle. Because of elaborate buildings, of little economic use, that have been constructed on the estates, and because of the high assessments that have been placed on these buildings, nobody can afford to buy such property

for farming purposes if he has to pay such high taxes, or even pay interest on the price of the buildings. This condition necessarily affects the attitudes of the students who are conclusively denied all opportunity to own desirable farms in their own home town. This attitude does not prevail among West Stockbridge students, because of a difference in opportunity.

EMPLOYMENT POSSIBILITIES

There is no large employer of labor in either town. The working people who live in these towns work in Pittsfield, Lee, South Lee, Housatonic, or Great Barrington. This means considerable travel to and from work, which consumes both time and energy, and does not tend to draw people to either town to live. Some few people are self-employed; some few more work on roads and railroads. In Stockbridge, in the past, estates have employed considerable labor as caretakers, gardeners, chauffeurs, maids, cooks, etc. During the war many of these places have been closed because of the scarcity of help, high income taxes, other interests of the owners, death of the owners, and a variety of other reasons. As many of the older generation of estate owners die, and as income taxes become more severe, it is doubtful whether many of the estates, now closed by war conditions, will ever be operated again in anything like the old, grand manner. This poses an acute problem in employment and in property valuations for the Town of Stockbridge. While West Stockbridge will not be affected by the closing of estates, all other aspects of the post-war employment problem are the same.

THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY served by Williams High School and its department of vocational agriculture comprises the two towns of Stockbridge and West Stockbridge. Occasionally students from other towns have come to study agriculture at Williams High School; the number of these students has never exceeded five at any one time. The main enrollment comes from Stockbridge and West Stockbridge. The possible enrollment of students from other towns will be considered in the final summary of conclusions. While the high-school students from West Stockbridge could conceivably go to some other high school, they have attended Williams since 1924. The school has been developed to serve both towns. The department of vocational agriculture could not exist with the enrollment from Stockbridge alone. So, for purposes of this study, I shall consider the possibilities of these two towns.

DESCRIPTION OF AREA

The two towns were chartered as one in the original grant, but, because they were separated by a high ridge of land, and because the western part of the Stockbridge Grant had scant consideration in the legislature from representatives who came from the eastern section, the western part of the grant sought separation from the eastern part, and was chartered a separate township in 1774. After several boundary adjustments, the towns' boundaries were established as they now exist. They are two rather small towns, totaling in area some 27,082.6 acres, and having a total population of about 2,912 inhabitants in 1940. Of these claimed residents a considerable number do not live here the year around, but maintain what may best be called secondary homes here. To these homes people come for week-ends, short vacations, and perhaps one long vacation per year. They may even plan to retire to their secondary homes at some future date. Stockbridge, in particular, is a resort town, with many large and beautiful estates that are now being abandoned, or are going on the real estate market and are becoming schools, convalescent homes, inns, etc. Besides the large estates the town has two large inns - Heaton Hall and The Red Lion Inn - which cater to the summer trade. One large estate has been developed into a psychiatric hospital - The Austin Riggs Foundation, - and another has been taken over by the Berkshire Symphonic Festival, Inc., for the Symphonic Festival and the Music School. The best land in the town is in the large estates, and usually it is not sold except as a unit containing the huge old mansions.

West Stockbridge is quite different in its composition. While it has not as much arable land as Stockbridge, it has more of real farming as

an industry. Besides farm products, milk, eggs, broilers, and turkeys, the town produces lime in a considerable volume.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL PATRONAGE AREA

LOCATION. THE TOWNS OF STOCKBRIDGE AND WEST STOCKBRIDGE, now being considered as the Williams High School patronage area, are situated in the Berkshire Hills, thirteen miles due south of Pittsfield, Massachusetts. The area is made up mainly of two branches of the Housatonic Valley. One branch is formed by the Housatonic River, which, entering the Town of Stockbridge on the east, flows around the western end of Monument Mountain, then turns south, and, passing through a steep ravine, drops to the border of Great Barrington at Housatonic. This drop in the river bed has been the cause of factory developments and water-power developments in the past. The total fall from the Lee border to the Great Barrington border is about two hundred feet, but most of this occurs in less than one mile of the ravine at Glendale. This is the present location of the dam and power station which provide power for the Monument Mills in Housatonic, a village in the Town of Great Barrington. The branch of the river in West Stockbridge is called the Williams River. This river flows through the town toward the south, and joins the Housatonic in Great Barrington, about one mile south of the village of Housatonic.

TOPOGRAPHY AND ELEVATION

THE LAND AREA of the two towns is made up of these two valleys, the intervales next the rivers, a table-land only a few feet higher, in Stockbridge called The Plain, some rolling hilly land leading back to the highlands which surround the two valleys, and the ridge known as West Stockbridge Mountain, which separates the two towns. The elevation above sea level ranges from 740 feet, where the Housatonic River enters Great Barrington at Housatonic, up to 2,005 feet, at the top of Harvey Mountain on the border between West Stockbridge and New York State. Stockbridge is enclosed in a bowl, overlooked by Yokun Seat, in Lenox, 2,030 feet, and Rattlesnake Mountain in the northern part of Stockbridge, 1,530 feet, Monument Mountain, near the southwest corner of the town, reaching 1,710 feet, and one summit of Beartown Mountain, in the extreme southeast corner of Stockbridge, reaching 1,730 feet above sea level. The principal land of agricultural value slopes from the valley floor up toward these peaks. All of the most useful land is below 1,200 feet elevation, most of it being lower than 1,100 feet. In West Stockbridge the lowest land lies adjacent to the Williams River where it flows into Great Barrington on the south at a level of 770 feet. The land rises rapidly from the valley floor, and reaches 2,005 feet at the crest of Harvey Mountain on the boundary of New York State, 1,990 feet at the crest of Tom Ball Mountain, near the southwest corner of the town. On the east the town is bounded by the ridge called West Stockbridge Mountain; this reaches 1,200 feet. In West Stockbridge the principal farm lands lie between 1,000 and 1,200 feet elevation. From this summary it is seen that the major part of the farm land and of the land having farming possibilities is not too

high in elevation to yield fairly reliable crops. Practically all of the land above 1,200 feet elevation is in forest or pasture; there is little, if any, attempt to farm these higher sections.

THE SOIL TYPES that predominate in the farming areas are: Dover Loam, Lenox Loam, Stockbridge Loam, and Pittsfield Loam. These, together with smaller areas of Dover Fine Sandy Loam, Ondawa Fine Sandy Loam, Palmyra Gravelly Loam, and Rodman Gravelly Loam, make up all of the land with agricultural potentialities. The many soil types shown on the Soil Survey Map of the United States Department of Agriculture indicate that soil conditions vary widely within each town. However, Dover Loam, Stockbridge Loam, Lenox Loam, and Pittsfield Loam are all of good productive ability when well managed.

DESCRIPTION OF FOUR SOIL TYPES[1]

"DOVER LOAM. The topsoil of Dover loam, under sod, is dark-brown or dark reddish-brown mellow loam 3 or 4 inches deep, grading to light-brown mellow loam, which continues to a depth of 6 or 8 inches. To a depth of 15 or 20 inches below the surface the subsoil is brown or yellowish-brown, grading to yellow or golden-yellow firm mellow loam and becoming slightly heavier and reddish brown or red in color between depths of 24 and 30 inches. Below a depth of 30 inches the subsoil is mottled gray, brown, yellow, and white and grades, at a depth ranging from 3 to 10 feet, to white calcareous, disintegrated limestone or marble. Loose fragments of limestone are present on the surface and in the topsoil and subsoil. The topsoil is slightly acid and the subsoil is alkaline.

"A variation of this soil occurs as a high bench or shoulder surrounding Mount Greylock. Here, in forested areas, the topsoil is dark grayish-brown or dark-brown loam, grading to light grayish-brown or brown mellow loam containing a noticeable quantity of fine sand and continuing to a depth of 6 inches. In cultivated fields the surface soil is 7 or 8 inches deep and consists of dark-brown or brown loam, the color depending on the quantity of organic matter present. The subsurface layer, about 3 inches thick, is firm yellowish-brown loam. Below this the subsoil, to a depth of 20 or 24 inches, is reddish-brown or yellowish-brown, firm but not compact loam material underlain by light yellowish-brown, reddish-brown, or red micaceous loam material. The substratum, at a depth of 30 or 36 inches, is partly disintegrated micaceous schist which varies in color from red to gray. The bedrock of schist or limestone occurs at a depth of 5 or 6 feet. A few fragments of schist and limestone are on the surface and embedded in the soil. The surface is level or gently sloping.

"Dover loam is widely distributed, occuring on low hills with smoothly rolling surfaces in the valley in the western half of the county, particularly in the towns of Adams, Stockbridge, Lee, Pittsfield, Cheshire, and Egremont. Drainage is excellent.

"Practically all of this land is cleared, though a few small wood lots of white pine, white birch, oak, maple, and ash remain. The area farmed is mostly in hay (timothy and clover) with small fields of silage and sweet corn, oats, potatoes, and alfalfa. There are some small apple orchards, and most farmers have good vegetable gardens.

"Hay, the most important crop, yields 1 or 1½ tons to the acre, corn from 45 to 70 bushels, and silage corn from 10 to 15 tons. Oats are cured as hay or harvested in shocks. Bluegrass forms a good sod in the pastures. Grass is probably reseeded as often on this land as on any in the county. Barnyard manure is used but is insufficient to maintain the fertility of the soil. No lime and little commercial fertilizer are used. . . .

"Land of this kind is suited to livestock raising and dairying, and orchards would do well, especially in Cheshire Town.

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[1] W. J. Latimer and M. O. Lanphear, Soil Survey Berkshire County, Massachusetts, United States Department of Agriculture, Number 39, Series 1923, 1287-1294.

"The restoration and maintenance of the supply of organic matter by the application of stable manure and the growing and plowing under of legumes and green-manure crops is a very important step in the improvement of the soil. . . .

"STOCKBRIDGE LOAM. The topsoil of Stockbridge loam is light-brown, somewhat acid, rather heavy mellow loam, having a slightly grayish cast when dry. Between depths of 6 or 8 inches and 12 or 15 inches, the material is yellowish-brown, slightly compact, friable loam, underlain by grayish-yellow or grayish-brown, rather compact loam having a distinct greenish hue and containing some dark slate fragments. At a depth of 24 inches, this is underlain by greenish-gray compact silty clay loam containing a noticeable quantity of partly disintegrated slate fragments. With increasing depth, the material becomes slightly grayer and has a decidedly smooth, greasy feel. In places a few fragments of limestone occur on the surface and in the topsoil and subsoil.

"Where slate fragments predominate in the till, the soil resembles the Dutchess soils in that the topsoil and upper part of the subsoil are browner, the lower part of the subsoil is deep and heavy, and the parent material is greenish-gray and contains enough blue slate to give the mass a bluish hue. These areas are common on hillsides where the glacial material from the valley limestone has been mixed with and deposited upon the slate. On the other hand, where the slate material has come from the slate ridge and has been mixed with limestone deposited in the valleys, the surface soil, under sod, consists of dark-brown loam 2 inches deep, grading to yellowish-brown or greenish-yellow mellow loam. The subsoil, at a depth ranging from 6 to 20 inches, is greenish-yellow compact silty clay loam. Below this, to a depth of 30 or 36 inches, is compact but friable greenish-yellow silty clay containing some small fragments of slate. The parent material is very compact, greenish-gray silty clay containing some slate and limestone fragments.

"Stockbridge loam has developed in the western part of the county in the towns of Richmond, West Stockbridge, Williamstown, Hancock, and Egremont and in smaller areas in the towns of North Adams, Adams, New Ashford, Lanesboro, Pittsfield, Alford, Stockbridge, and Sheffield. It occurs in the valley adjacent to the Taconic Range, around the base of this range and on its smoother sides and lower ridges near State Line, and in a few places on drumlins and drumloids.

"The surface is smoothly rolling or sloping, and drainage is good. The consistence and texture of the topsoil, subsoil, and parent material are such that crops rarely suffer either from drought or excessive moisture.

"Stockbridge loam is one of the most extensive and important soils in the county. The original forest consisted of hardwoods, such as oak, beech, ash, and maple, with some white and brown birch. Fully 80 per cent of the land is now cleared and used for farming. About 60 per cent of the cleared area is planted to clover and timothy. The remainder is in grass, pasture, or cultivated crops. The pasture land supports a good bluegrass sod and is mostly open, although some hardhack has grown up. The principal crops grown are corn for silage, oats, buckwheat, and some small patches of sweet corn, potatoes, and other vegetables. Small commercial apple orchards are kept, the largest being in Richmond Town.

"Crop yields on this soil are above the average for the county. Hay yields from 1 to 2½ tons to the acre; corn from 50 to 125 bushels, depend-

ing on the season, quantity of fertilizer used, and cultivation; silage corn from 12 to 20 tons; and buckwheat from 20 to 40 bushels. Oats do well but tend to lodge. They are cut and cured as hay or are harvested in bundles. Apples yield heavily and their quality is good.

"Barnyard manure, made available by the extensive dairy farming on this land, aids greatly in maintaining the fertility of the soil. Little commercial fertilizer is used, but some of the valley farmers use lime. Most of the sod land is not reseeded until the sod begins to fail. Oats are used as a nurse crop for grass, and clover is sown with grass. Hay land is used for pasture when the stand weakens. . . .

"This land is best adapted to dairying and livestock raising, and should be so used although the acreage in orchards might profitably be increased. . . .

"LENOX LOAM. In virgin areas the topsoil of Lenox loam consists of a thin covering of leaf mold underlain by a 3-inch layer of dark greenish-brown mellow loam which grades to light greenish-brown mellow loam continuing to a depth of 5 or 6 inches. The subsoil, to a depth varying from 20 to 24 inches, is greenish-yellow firm, friable loam which grades to fairly heavy micaceous loam. This material continues downward to a depth of 30 or 36 inches, where it grades to light micaceous loam containing some partly weathered schist. Below a depth of 40 inches the substratum is in many places composed of partly disintegrated schist. Angular fragments and slabs of schist and pieces of limestone are present in the surface soil, subsoil, and underlying glacial drift. Where this soil occurs in old pastures the surface layer consists of dark-brown loam 2 or 3 inches deep, underlain by greenish-brown loam which prevails downward to the subsoil 8 inches below the surface. In most places in cultivated fields the soil, within plow depth, is dark-brown loam with a greenish-yellow hue.

"Lenox loam occurs on smoothly sloping and drumloid hills in the valley division of Berkshire County. The larger areas are in the towns of Lanesboro, Lenox, Cheshire, and Stockbridge, and smaller areas are in Lee, Pittsfield, and Sheffield Towns. Drainage is good. This is one of the important soils of the county. About 80 per cent of the land is cleared and farmed. The remainder is forested with maple, oak, elm, ash, white pine, and white birch. Most of this land is in hay, only a comparatively small acreage being in other crops. Some silage corn is grown, and small pastures support good bluegrass sod.

"Yields of hay range from 1 to 3 tons to the acre, depending on the season and management. Oats are harvested as hay, and heavy yields are usually obtained. Corn yields from 50 to 100 bushels to the acre, silage from 10 to 18 tons, and potatoes from 100 to 200 bushels.

"Little commercial fertilizer or lime is used, but stable manure is applied on some fields. Clover is usually seeded with grass, but grassland is not commonly reseeded until after the hay begins to fail. To grow clover successfully, lime should be applied to correct soil acidity. . . .

"PITTSFIELD LOAM. The topsoil of Pittsfield loam, under sod, consists of a 1-inch layer of dark-brown mellow loam underlain, to a depth of 8 or 10 inches, by brown or yellowish-brown mellow loam low in organic matter. The subsoil is yellowish-brown, firm but not compact loam, which at a depth of 20 inches grades to greenish-yellow, fairly compact silty clay loam containing yellow or white fragments of partly weathered limestone. This rests on the unweathered bedrock at a depth of about 40 inches,

though in places the greenish compact till with fragments of limestone continues to a depth of 10 or more feet. This underlying till is calcareous, but the surface soil is slightly acid.

"This soil occurs in the valley division of the county, fairly large areas being in Pittsfield, Richmond, Lee, Lenox, Stockbridge, and Great Barrington Towns and small areas in other valley towns. The smooth surface is gently rolling, and drainage is good. The compact till substratum holds moisture well but is sufficiently porous to permit the movement of ground water.

"Pittsfield loam is one of the most important soils in the county, and nearly all of it is cleared and under cultivation. The remainder consists of wood lots of white pine, ash, white birch, maple, elm, and oak. The brush in pastures is shrubby cinquefoil or Goshen hardhack (Potentilla fruticosa), and bluegrass is the dominant pasture grass. About 70 per cent of the farmed area is devoted to hay. The remainder is used for such cultivated crops as silage corn, sweet corn, oats, rye, clover, buckwheat, potatoes, and other vegetables. There are some small apple orchards, and a number of dairies are in operation on this land. Hay yields from 1½ to 2 tons to the acre, corn from 65 to 100 bushels, potatoes from 150 to 200 bushels, and silage corn from 12 to 15 tons.

"Most farmers keep dairies and use the stable manure on their fields. For special crops small applications of commercial fertilizer are used. . . .

"Pittsfield loam is a strong soil and is well suited to general farming, dairying, orcharding, and truck gardening. Lime might be used to advantage where clover grows poorly. Much of this land is deficient in organic matter. The supply could be increased and maintained by applications of barnyard manure and by plowing under green-manure crops. . . ."

These four soil types make up at least two-thirds of the cropland in the two towns being studied. Since this land is all lower than 1,200 feet above sea level, there should be a reasonable assurance of success with silage corn. The crop succeeds in all but the poorest seasons, or on soils where drainage is poor. The soils are strong enough to support good crop production for dairy farming.

THE GROWING SEASON is variable to extremes. In the nine years of my tenure the date of last killing frost in spring has ranged from May 10 to June 22. The date of first killing frost in fall has varied from August 23 to October 15. The average date of last killing frost in spring is May 20. The average date of first killing frost in fall is September 25. This gives an average growing season of one hundred and twenty-eight frost-free days. The extreme seasons have extended from one causing a complete corn failure in the shortest season, to a very good season

in which Sweepstakes Corn ripened for husking. The season varies considerably within the area according to the consitions of air drainage and elevation. Anyone planting corn or frost-tender vegetables must avoid frost pockets. The season precludes any commercial vegetable production except of cool-weather crops, but corn is a reasonably sure crop for silage, and hay does very well.

THE WEATHER. During the summer the temperature seldom goes above 90° F. at any time, and the nights are cooler than 65° F. all summer, with the possible exception of the last two weeks in July and the first two weeks in August. In 1944 only three nights had minimum temperatures above 65° F. The July average temperature at Pittsfield (our nearest weather station) is 70.8° F. The January average temperature is 23.9° F. The highest summer temperature, during the years for which records have been kept, was 101° F., and the lowest winter temperature was -23° F. There are some folks who claim much more spectacular extremes of temperature. The average annual precipitation at pittsfield is 40.83 inches; that in Egremont is 43.42 inches.[1] The area being studied is about halfway between these two weather stations. The average annual snowfall is about 50 inches, but this varies greatly from year to year and at different elevations. The higher elevations receive much heavier snowfall than the valleys. The rainfall during the growing season for our two nearby weather stations is shown in the following table.

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[1]United States Department of Agriculture Yearbook, 1941, Climate and Man, 991.

TABLE I

AVERAGE RAINFALL DURING GROWING SEASON[1]

	Rainfall	May	June	July	August	September	Total
Egremont	Inches	3.38	4.29	4.39	4.64	4.12	20.82
Pittsfield	Inches	3.05	3.83	4.14	4.16	4.04	19.22

It is reasonable to state that the average rainfall in Stockbridge and West Stockbridge averages 20 inches per growing season, and 20 inches for the other seven months of the year. It is very rare that drought causes a crop failure, but about one summer in ten is so wet as to cause losses from failure to harvest hay of good quality, and from failure of corn on wetter soils.

THE PREVAILING WINDS blow from the west and northwest during the winter. This fact is important in locating farm buildings, but it does not seriously affect the location of crops.

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[1]United States Department of Agriculture Yearbook, 1941, Climate and Man, 991.

LAND TYPES. In 1935 a classification of land types was made by the Massachusetts State College Experiment Station in preparation for a land-use study for Massachusetts. According to this classification of land, based on its agricultural potentialities, these results are reported;

TABLE II

LAND TYPES - WILLIAMS HIGH SCHOOL AREA

	Total Acres	Land Acres	Water Acres	Type I	%	Type II	%	Type III (Poor)	%
Stockbridge	15,169.4	14,617.4	552	5,916.1	39	4,399.1	29	4,854.2	32
West Stockbridge	11,913.2	11,735.2	178	3,216.6	27	3,812.2	32	4,884.4	41
Area Total	27,082.6	26,352.6	730	9,132.7		8,211.3		9,738.6	

The total of Types I and II equals 17,344.0 acres of the total area of 27,082.6 acres; 730 acres is taken up by ponds and streams; 9,132.7 acres is classed as good agricultural land; 8,211.3 acres is medium agricultural land, and is suited to production of hay and pastures; 9,738.6 acres is poor agricultural land, and should be kept in forests. The process of retiring poor land from cultivation has been going on for years. It is attested by the great number of stone walls around woodlots that now support the second or third generation of large trees. These walls once surrounded cleared fields, but as crop yields proved unprofitable, and as better opportunities became available elsewhere, the hilltop farms and the fields high on the hillsides were let go back to forest. This process is continuing as is shown by the following table.

TABLE III

NUMBER OF FARMS - LAND IN FARMS - IMPROVED LAND IN FARMS[1]
STOCKBRIDGE AND WEST STOCKBRIDGE

	NUMBER OF FARMS			LAND IN FARMS				IMPROVED LAND IN FARMS			
Year	S	WS	Total	S	WS	Total Acres	Acres per Farm	S	WS	Total Acres	Acres per Farm
1940	44	23	67	5,074	5,039	10,113	150.9	2,134	3,199	5,333	79.5
1935	57	69	126	9,157	5,503	14,660	116.3	3,021	2,623	5,644	44.8
1930	28	40	68	4,940	5,252	10,192	150.0	1,711	2,803	4,514	66.4
1925	96	88	184	10,720	8,289	19,009	103.3	3,628	3,659	7,287	39.6

From a reading of this table we see that there has been a sharp decrease in the number of farms from 1925 to 1935. This loss in number of farms is paralleled by a decrease in acres of land in farms, from 19,009 down to 14,660. The same tendency is shown in the figures for acres of improved land in farms, a decrease from 7,287 to 5,644 acres. Land which is withdrawn from farms can be put in forests; it can lie idle, neither harvested nor developed in any way; or it can be put into building developments. There has been little building of any kind in the past twenty years in these towns to take land from farms. In Stockbridge there has been a large increase in the acreage of idle land; this is not true to such an extent in West Stockbridge. The remainder of the land withdrawn from farms has gone into forests. At the same time that poorer land is being withdrawn from farming, we observe that the number of acres of improved land per farm has risen from 39.6 in 1925 to 79.5 in 1940.

[1]United States Census by Minor Civil Divisions.

In other words, the average productive land unit has doubled in size. I think that this will not be shown at such a rate in the 1945-census, because of the fact that the five-year census has always reported more small units than the decennial census. For the same reason no trends can be drawn from 1930 to 1935, or from 1935 to 1940.

All cropland, cropland harvested, and plowable pasture are reported here, to illustrate the change in the past twenty years for the farms of the area.

TABLE IV

ALL CROPLAND - CROPLAND HARVESTED - PLOWABLE PASTURE[1]
STOCKBRIDGE AND WEST STOCKBRIDGE

	ALL CROPLAND			CROPLAND HARVESTED			PLOWABLE PASTURE		
Year	S	WS	Total Acres	S	WS	Total Acres	S	WS	Total Acres
1940	1,520	1,941	3,461	1,400	1,642	3,042	614	1,258	1,872
1935	1,647	1,660	3,307	1,550	1,638	3,188	1,374	963	2,337
1924	3,386	3,049	6,435	3,161	2,806	5,967	242	610	852

The area of total cropland and cropland harvested has decreased, but at the same time a considerable amount of this land has been converted to pasture. No data were available for 1930 on these land classifications.

[1]United States Census by Minor Civil Divisions.

THE VALUATIONS OF LAND AND BUILDINGS are very important to young men and to their prospects of becoming established in farming. Valuations of land and buildings on places classed as farms by the 1940 census are shown here to illustrate the comparison between Stockbridge and West Stockbridge, and the Berkshire County average.

TABLE V

VALUE OF LAND AND BUILDINGS ON FARMS[1]
STOCKBRIDGE, WEST STOCKBRIDGE, AND BERKSHIRE COUNTY AVERAGE

	Combined Values Land and Buildings			Value per Acre	Value Buildings Only	Value Buildings per Acre Farm Land	Total Value Machines	Value Machines per Farm
	1925	1935	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940
S	$ 1,637,275	$ 1,888,600	$ 1,790,600	$352.90	$1,349,540	$265.97	$ 49,900	$1,559.38
WS	482,500	306,050	190,375	37.78	108,276	21.48	36,923	1,318.67
BCAVERAGE	19,469,323	21,266,050	12,974,535	56.29	7,815,875	33.91	1,039,510	865.54

[1]United States Census by Minor Civil Divisions.

THE ESTATES. Another factor in the problem of establishing young men in farming, and in the maintenance of a department of vocational agriculture, is the prospect for attaining ownership of land. This is dominated by the large estates in Stockbridge. I must mention Lenox, too, since both towns have the same problem. The problem is not serious in other towns, but in Stockbridge, where the school is located, the land and buildings on it are held at such high valuations that nobody could hope to buy the property for farming purposes at its assessed valuation. From the 1940 census in the preceding table - VALUE OF LAND AND BUILDINGS ON FARMS - I find that land and buildings on farms are valued at a gross figure that averages $352.90 for each acre of land in Stockbridge. The corresponding value for West Stockbridge is $37.78 per acre. The value of buildings alone on farms in Stockbridge comes to $265.97 per acre of farm land. The value of buildings per acre of farm land in West Stockbridge is $21.48. The county average valuation, for land and buildings combined, is $56.29 per acre; that for buildings alone is $33.91. It is impossible for farm income to support such valuations as obtain in Stockbridge, so, valuations must come down or our young men cannot own land. The alternative, which might get some of this land back into production, is to work out a lease for a period of five or more years, so that any renter would be encouraged to improve the land with a prospect of getting returns for such improvements. As the farm land on estates is used now, it is cut for hay until nobody will cut and draw the crop away, and then the fields are allowed to grow up to brush. If the land-renter could be certain of returns for fertilizing, top-dressing, and re-seeding this land, he would have a real chance to become established in farming. This chance awaits improved tenant-owner agreements. The serious part of this situation, from the agricultural viewpoint, is that

the large estates, that are now almost completely idle, contain the best farm land in the town.

It may be of some interest to show how the estates reached the high valuations that they have. In 1823, I find that a Mr. William Ashburner, an English gentleman of some means, built a house on what is now Ice Glen Road, along the side of Bear Mountain. This residence was called Bombay Hill. The house is reported to have required more servants than the family could afford, and so was only partially used. The next estate was developed in 1830, and from that time on, but particularly from the time of the Civil War to 1900, there was a continued process of buying up farms and building mansions which commanded spacious views. Prospect Hill, Ice Glen Road, the heights above Stockbridge Bowl, saw the development of the most spectacular "Big Houses." It was fashionable among the very wealthy to own a place in Stockbridge or Lenox. Rivalry was keen among people who were anxious to enjoy the life of country gentlefolk. Land values rose from $50 to $1,000 per acre, and all the land that could be bought was consolidated into estates. For a period from the Civil War until 1900 these places were operated to some extent as farms. About 1912 some of the older families gained other interests, or lost some of their money. However it happened, building stopped and retrenchment set in; but this process came very gradually. It was not until the 1930's that there came any great liquidation of properties. Now there is a trend among property owners to close up properties, because of the help shortage, high income taxes, high inheritance taxes, or other interests, or possibly for a combination of reasons. Some properties have even been sold for taxes, because the owners did not have enough interest to keep up tax payments. A few have been wrecked, torn down to avoid high taxes. This is true more in Lenox than in Stockbridge, but somewhat in both places.

Valuations of real estate have been reduced, but the assessment on estates makes them impossible to operate as farms except on a lease basis, as described above. Then the owner would be paying the high tax, and getting partial payment from the renter. This process could not go on indefinitely.

TYPES OF FARMING. The area being studied is best suited to dairy farming, poultry production, and home vegetable growing, including some small fruit. Peaches are not winter-hardy here; neither are the less hardy varieties of apples. There are no commercial orchards or vegetable farms. Dairy cows are the predominant livestock, and they have no serious rival, where the operator has sufficient land of desirable types. On some smaller farms of light land types poultry is important, but the business has never competed on a large scale with dairying. Turkey production for meat may become an important enterprise on some farms, if a favorable price situation prevails, but in low-price years western-grown turkeys undersell local birds in our markets. Local birds must be of high quality to sell at the necessary premium. There is some part-time or subsistence farming in the area. In 1934 there were thirty-two operators of farms classified as part-time farmers.[1] They worked an average of 175.7 days each at employment off their farms. There are no more recent figures available on this type of operators, but I know many who have carried full-time factory jobs during the war, and have at the same time produced enough farm products to classify under census requirements of $250-per-year value of products.

The crop production of the area is reported in the following tables, which show the available figures for 1924, 1934, and 1940, taken from the census data.

The first table shows Hay Production.

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[1]United States Census by Minor Civil Divisions, 1935.

TABLE VI

CROP PRODUCTION - HAY[1]
STOCKBRIDGE AND WEST STOCKBRIDGE

	1924		1934		1940	
	ALFALFA					
	Acreage	Tonnage	Acreage	Tonnage	Acreage	Tonnage
S	1				118	410
WS						
Total	1				118	410
	TIMOTHY AND/OR CLOVER ALONE OR MIXED					
S	38		1,257	1,442	420	765
WS	202		1,220	1,567	715	818
Total	240		2,477	3,009	1,135	1,583
	OTHER TAME AND WILD GRASSES					
S	2,902		83	63	526	846
WS	2,230		161	141	239	258
Total	5,132		244	204	765	1,104
	SMALL GRAINS CUT FOR HAY					
S			38	70	23	48
WS			61	121	23	11
Total			99	191	46	59
	TOTAL HAY ACREAGE AND PRODUCTION*					
S	2,941	2,770	1,340	1,575	1,064	2,021
WS	2,432	2,286	1,381	1,829	954	1,076
Total	5,373	5,056	2,721	3,404	2,018	3,097
GRAINS CUT FOR HAY			99	191	46	59
ALL HAY HARVESTED	5,373	5,056	2,820	3,595	2,064	3,156

*Does not include small grain cut for hay.

[1]United States Census by Minor Civil Divisions.

This shows a decline in acreage and tonnage of hay harvested, but that the decrease in tonnage is not proportionate to the decrease in acreage. The hay harvested for 1940 was 3,156 tons from 2,064 acres, for an average of 1,5 tons per acre. This compares with less than one ton per acre in 1924.

TABLE VII

CROP PRODUCTION - CORN[1]
STOCKBRIDGE AND WEST STOCKBRIDGE

	1924	1934	1940
	CORN FOR ALL PURPOSES - ACRES		
S	113	88	121
WS	223	177	333
Total	336	265	454

CORN FOR GRAIN - ACREAGE AND PRODUCTION

	Acres	Bushels	Acres	Bushels	Acres	Bushels
S	44	2,295	19	903	16	538
WS	69	2,910	57	2,121	73	4,371
Total	113	5,205	76	3,024	89	4,909

CORN FOR SILAGE - ACREAGE AND PRODUCTION*

	Acres	Tons
S	92	1,082
WS	259	2,500
Total	351	3,582

*No figures available for 1924 or 1934.

The principal use of corn is for silage; 351 acres were raised in 1940, averaging 10 tons per acre. Eighty-nine acres were raised for

[1]United States Census by Minor Civil Divisions.

grain in that year, and 14 for all other purposes.

The production of hay and corn are the main factors in determining the number of cows kept for milk.

The number of cows kept for milk, number of youngstock, and number of all cattle are a fair measure of the size of dairy business over the years.

TABLE VIII

CATTLE POPULATION[1]
STOCKBRIDGE AND WEST STOCKBRIDGE

	MILK COWS			ALL OTHER CATTLE			TOTAL ALL CATTLE		
	S	WS	Total	S	WS	Total	S	WS	Total
*1944							526		
1940	380	462	842	309	187	496	689	649	1,338
1935	366	403	769	139	168	307	505	571	1,076
1930	324	311	635	87	151	238	411	462	872
1925	363	398	761	111	70	181	474	468	942
1920	477	340	817	161	113	274	646	453	1,099
1915	509	323	832	170	79	249	679	392	1,071
1910	618	316	934	157	87	244	775	403	1,178
1905	589	318	907	150	111	261	739	429	1,168
1900	675	352	1,027	303	77	380	978	429	1,407
1895	624	368	992	190	44	234	814	558	1,372
1890	750	458	1,208	285	88	373	1,035	743	1,778
1885	725	417	1,142	360	137	497	1,085	777	1,862
**1880	696	481	1,177						
1875	608	361	969						
1870	636	398	1,034						
1865	496	284	780						

*Figures for "MILK COWS" and "ALL OTHER CATTLE" not classified separately.
**No data available before 1885 for "ALL OTHER CATTLE" or "TOTAL ALL CATTLE."

[1]Assessors' Reports.

The number of milk cows kept in the area is determined by the profit in milk production as compared to alternative employment. We see an increase in cow numbers from 635 in 1930 to 842 in 1940. In that time mechanized operation came to the area, farmers could handle larger units of stock, and milk prices rose. The large numbers of cattle in all classes before 1900 show that the area was much more agricultural in character then than it is now. Most estates at that time presumed to produce farm products. They were gentlemen's farms. Now, all that is largely past, and the land no longer supports herds of fancy cattle. There is no trend shown by the numbers of cattle here reported, unless we are to say that the number remains even, except to increase as milk prices rise.

The only measure of production is shown in actual amounts produced. These data are available only for 1940.

TABLE IX

DAIRY PRODUCTION - 1940 CENSUS[1]

	Farms Reporting	Cows Milked	Gallons Milk Produced	Farms Reporting	Pounds Butter Churned	Farms Reporting	Gallons Whole Milk Sold
S	35	367	255,049	8	2,040	20	220,515
NS	28	443	272,234	3	930	25	261,138
Total	63	810	527,283	11	2,970	45	481,653

[1]United States Census by Minor Civil Divisions.

The average milk production, as shown in the census data above, is 5,598.6 pounds per cow milked. While this is higher than the state average, it is nowhere near the average needed for profitable production. The dairy herd improvement associations calculate that the equivalent of 7,500 pounds of 4% butterfat milk is the level needed to insure a profit. This certainly shows a need for education, record-keeping, culling, and better feeding on the part of our farmers.

The poultry production, and numbers on farms are shown in the two tables, CHICKENS ON FARMS AND EGGS PRODUCED, and NUMBER OF CHICKENS RAISED (Tables X and XI).

TABLE X

CHICKENS ON FARMS AND EGGS PRODUCED[1]

	Number Chickens - January 1			Dozens Eggs Produced	
	1925	1935	1940	1925	1935
S	4,379	2,042	1,488	26,000	10,557
WS	2,910	2,297	861	28,144	18,144
Total	7,289	4,339	2,349	54,144	28,701

[1]United States Census by Minor Civil Divisions.

TABLE XI

NUMBER OF CHICKENS RAISED[1]

	1924	1934	1940
S	6,995	2,762	10,736
▪S	4,448	6,538	978
Total	11,443	9,300	11,714

These tables indicate a decline in number of hens kept, a decline of about fifty per cent in egg production, but a fairly steady number of chicks raised. This results from the presence of two broiler-growers in the area. The number of chicks raised has been considerably higher since the war started.

Poultry production, particularly egg production, was very profitable in the late 1920's. This led to expansion in the size of flocks, on a basis that could not stand the terrific competition of the depression years. This does not prove that egg production cannot show a profit in the area. I believe it can because there are a few outstanding poultry farmers who have done very well in nearby towns. It takes good men to succeed, but some have done it.

OTHER MEASURES of the type of farming are the numbers of swine, sheep, and horses kept. At one time nearly every family raised a hog, most farmers kept some sheep, and horses did all the farm work and much of the trucking. The following table is interesting for its historical background.

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[1]United States Census by Minor Civil Divisions.

TABLE XII

OTHER FARM ANIMALS[1]
STOCKBRIDGE AND WEST STOCKBRIDGE

	Swine			Sheep			Horses		
	S	WS	Total	S	WS	Total	S	WS	Total
1944	23			15			50		
1940	89	16	105	19	30	49	70	73	143
1935	28	22	50	108	34	142	87	97	184
1930	24	3	27	95	33	128	133	86	219
1925	56	33	89	98	20	118	218	147	365
1920	71	49	118	242		242	349	150	499
1915	102	55	157	228	71	299	384	216	600
1910	72	30	102	337	122	459	454	258	612
1905	73	66	139	226	348	574	478	243	721
1900	59	57	116	369	411	780	574	269	843
1895	90	123	213	449	344	793	574	324	898
1890	123	173	296	436	251	687	456	316	772
1885	156	186	342	318	402	720	401	281	682
1880	*	*	*	649	651	1,300	394	291	685
1875				741	487	1,228	386	305	691
1870				1,145	1,911	3,056	313	311	624
1865				1,352	2,074	3,426	250	229	479

*Not reported before 1885.

The decline in the number of swine, reported from 342, in 1885, to 27, in 1930, shows the tendency of people to buy their meat rather than to raise it. By 1940 the war had stimulated people to produce meat at home, hence the increase in the number of hogs. Swine-raising is not likely to become a major enterprise because of the shortage of suitable cheap feed. Sheep were most important just after the Civil War, but with the decline in the price of wool, and with competition from other areas of cheaper feed, sheep have almost vanished. They are of very little ag-

[1]United States Census by Minor Civil Divisions.

ricultural importance here now. Horses are fast becoming a memory. Trucks and tractors are far more common than horses. Hardly anyone raises colts for draft purposes. Many farmers operate with no horses. The number of horses decreases every year. This parallels the national trend.

LABOR ON FARMS is another measure of the amount of farming done. The table which follows shows family labor and hired labor on farms in the two towns, in January, 1935. This also gives an idea of the employment possibilities on farms in the area.

TABLE XIII

FARM LABOR - 1935 - FIRST WEEK OF JANUARY[1]
STOCKBRIDGE AND WEST STOCKBRIDGE

	FAMILY LABOR		HIRED LABOR	
	Farms Reporting	Persons Working	Farms Reporting	Persons Working
S	31	62	37	132
WS	67	76	19	41
Total	98	138*	56	173*

*173+138 = 311 - Total Farms Workers.

The total is 311 workers, on 126 farms, for an average of 2.4 workers per farm. I believe that this number of workers on these farms is the high for recent years, because of the depression and unemployment in industry. Now that the demands of the armed forces and war industry conflict with farm work for the labor supply, the number of workers on farms must be much smaller. In spite of the smaller number of workers, most farms are maintaining their production at or above the pre-war level, but many items of work are neglected to keep up the main production. It

[1]United States Census by Minor Civil Divisions.

is doubtful if the same farms will ever again employ more labor than they did in 1935.

The farm employment possibilities, then, depend upon an expansion of the number of farms, the acreage of the land in farms, the productive units on these farms, or employment outside the area. Let us consider these in order. The number of commercial farms has been decreasing since 1920. There is no indication of a change in the trend. The number of part-time farms has increased, but these places do not offer full-time employment for the owners; they do not employ any outside labor. There are some possibilities here for men to develop their home places in connection with other employment. This type of farming will make its principal contribution to the farm family living , rather than to commercial sales. Returns must be measured in savings on food costs, and in wholesome family living. The acreage of land in farms might be increased by developing a good lease for farm lands, so that land that is now idle in the estates could be put back into production. Much of this land is potentially very productive, and it is held in large units that would lend themselves to machine operation.

ANIMAL UNITS. The number of animal units on farms could be increased by developing the poultry and turkey enterprises. More productive man-work units could be accomplished by increasing the number of cattle kept. This could be achieved through a program of improved crop production, the use of fertilizers, and the use of improved varieties in seeding mixtures. There is scarcely a farm in the area that produces at capacity. This is one possibility for employment of the farm youth, but it depends on favorable price relationships. If present relationships between milk and feed prices could be maintained, many of these practices would go into effect. Just now one hundred pounds of milk equals one

hundred forty-three pounds of grain in price. This makes good business for dairymen because their largest cash expense is for purchased grain, and this is the best price ratio in over twenty years.

Employment outside the area is of no great value to boys here. Most boys must live at home until they are through school, so their in-school employment must be near home. If they cannot be employed in agriculture during school, they will never be so employed.

THE POPULATION of the area is the basic material for any school program. The numbers of children in school demonstrate what part of that population is taking advantage of the school opportunities. The number of housing units in the area gives some idea of the need for further housing. Therefore, I am presenting the following tabulation of housing units, population of the two towns, and school membership.

TABLE XIV

HOUSING UNITS - POPULATION - SCHOOL MEMBERSHIP
STOCKBRIDGE AND WEST STOCKBRIDGE

	Number Dwellings			Population			School Population		
	S	WS	Total	S	WS	Total	S	WS	Total
1944	585	400	985	1,739	1,059	2,798	254	193	447
1940	581	337	918	1,850	1,062	2,912	278	201	479
1935	575	369	944	1,921	1,138	3,059	312	221	533
1930	573	314	887	1,762	1,124	2,876	337	265	562
1925	551	332	883	1,830	1,212	3,042	376	258	634
1920	565	341	906	1,764	1,058	2,822			
1915	551	330	881	1,901	1,277	3,178			
1910	526	314	840	1,933	1,271	3,204			
1905	530	324	854	2,022	1,023	3,045			
1900	516	337	853	2,081	1,158	3,239			
1895	499	337	836	2,077	1,257	3,334			
1890	480	341	821						
1885	469	371	840						
1880	443	378	821						
1875	425	355	780						
1870	385	358	743						
1865	383	278	661						

This tabulation indicates an increase in the number of housing units from 661, in 1865, to 985, in 1944, while the population has declined from 3,334, in 1895, to 2,912, in 1940. This shows a greater use of single-family units for housing in recent years, but there is a real need

for new housing in both Stockbridge and West Stockbridge for the present population. There has been very little building in the past twenty years, though there has been some conversion of other buildings into dwellings in West Stockbridge since 1940. I think this is an opportunity for remedying the shrinking tax base.

The high-school population of 1925 corresponds to a relatively high population, along with a large portion of that population in the school ages. Such a large number will not be reached again until 1948 to 1950, when the present generation of war babies becomes of school age. I could not report school membership before 1925 because figures are not available. There is one other set of data that should be available, but is not. This is the annual school census, which is supposed to list all persons of school age. These lists have not varied from school membership for some years, and I know of individuals not yet sixteen years old who have not been in school, but whose names did not show on the enumerator's report. There is a real need for accurate listing of these people. This failure in listing such potential students is serious because very often the boys who have dropped out of school early would have been the best vocational prospects. Many boys drop out simply because they see nothing interesting to them in the standard academic program. We have no record of their number over the years.

From the available figures we can see that the school population could never have been more than two hundred in high school, assuming an even distribution by grades. In my nine years here the high enrollment was 172, the low figure, 118, in the four-year high-school course. The highest enrollment came in 1936-1937, when industrial employment was low and many students stayed in school rather than be unemployed outside,even though they were poor students. In times of high industrial employment

there is a normal withdrawal of about twenty-five per cent of each class between entering the freshman year and graduation. This withdrawal rate accelerates in boom times and retards in depressions. The high-school enrollment since 1925 is shown in the following table:

TABLE XV

ENROLLMENT OF WILLIAMS HIGH SCHOOL, STOCKBRIDGE[1]

1944	129
1940	142
1935	155
1930	113
1925	82

The enrollment prior to 1925 is not significant because 1924 was the first year when the West Stockbridge students came to Williams as a group. Taking the average of these five years as an indication of what the enrollment has been, and studying the total population of the area in relation to pupils in high school, we find that we have had an average of 124.2 pupils in high school, for an average population of 2,935. This gives a ratio of one high school student for each 23.6 total population. With no industries in either town it seems improbable that there will be any increase in population in the predictable future. It seems fair to assume a maximum population of 3,000 for purposes of this study. If the ratio of high-school enrollment to population prevails, we can plan on 125 students in high school. Of the students in high school girls average to make up 53%. and boys make up 47%. Of the boys in high school it is nor-

[1]Town Reports of Stockbridge.

mal to expect not more than 20% to enroll in the agriculture course. This means that in Williams High School, with the average enrollment from Stockbridge and West Stockbridge, the reasonable number of boys to pursue this course would not run above 10. We can add to this number two or three students per year, who might stay in school to study agriculture, plus a possible enrollment of four boys from towns other than the regular school area. (The number of these students has ranged from one to five in the past.) This gives a possible maximum enrollment of 17 students. The highest enrollment ever achieved in this department was 22, the low figure to date is 9. In the high number were included five from outside the Stockbridge-West Stockbridge area. It is possible that more such students would come if problems of administration and transportation could be solved. There are no such students now. In the high number were eleven students from Stockbridge; now there are four, and not over five or six as a prospective average. In the high enrollment there were six boys from West Stockbridge; now there are five. The number keeps quite constant. From the known prospects I judge that our number of boys will be 12 in 1945-1946.

According to the law of Massachusetts, a student from any town which does not support vocational training in agriculture may go to an approved school where such training is given, and his town must pay his tuition. Under this provision of the law, students have come to study agriculture at Williams High from towns other than the normal patronage area. During my nine years here six students have come from Tyringham, one from Lenox, one from Richmond, one from Becket, and two from Egremont. There have been other boys interested, but due to difficulties of transportation or school administration, they have not enrolled. If a sympathic attitude could be developed on the part of the school administration in

surrounding towns, so that whatever boys might be interested in the agricultural course could be shown its possibilities, then this type of boy could form a substantial part of the enrollment in the department. In order to build a basis for this desirable situation, Superintendent William A. Dexter and I have visited all of the surrounding superintendents of schools, to solicit their cooperation in contacting boys of bona fide agricultural interest. To date several prospects have been discovered which promise to increase the enrollment for next year. These contacts are being followed up with an outline of the course, a second meeting, and personal visits to all prospective students. The number of these students who come may determine the effectiveness of the department.

COURSES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL GROUPS. In addition to the regular daytime classes, the department has offered instruction to out-of-school groups in automotive pre-induction training (through a cooperative arrangement with a local garage and the State Department of Education), repair and maintenance of farm equipment at the school shop, home food production (victory gardens, victory flocks, etc.), estate management (a group of estate gardeners held a series of discussion meetings each winter for five years before the war). Now a group of farmers in Tyringham is studying dairy-production problems, with the leadership of the agriculture teacher from Stockbridge. While these activities are all desirable, and while they do not cost the town any money, they are not the main business of a department of vocational agriculture. When the enrollment in day classes falls as low as that prevailing now in Stockbridge vocational agriculture department, the service is likely to be criticized as not necessary, or not serving the best interest of the community. Of the courses offered to out-of-school groups, the victory-garden courses in West Stockbridge and the present dairy-problems course

in Tyringham have been most successful. These cannot be said to serve Stockbridge, although they will result in contacts leading to an increase in enrollment in the day-school program. The evening shop programs served both Stockbridge and surrounding towns, though such work would require much more floor space in the shop for best results.

In addition to the formal class work for various groups, there are many contacts between local home-owners and farmers and the agriculture teacher during which technical information is supplied by the teacher. These inquiries number at least one hundred per year. Their values would be hard to determine. During the war emergency there have been numerous calls for advice on selective service, farm employment problems, and crop production problems. Every day-class member has been instructed in home food production, food preservation, and healthful diet. These things are not commercial agriculture, but they contribute to satisfactory rural living. If this living can be made as attractive as town living, then our best farm youth will be encouraged to stay on the farm. If our community, our state, and our nation, has a contented and stable farm population, based on ownership of family-sized farms, then it will be a long way on the road to industrial stability and prosperity.

THE COST OF THE DEPARTMENT to the town is a factor which will affect any decision as to its continuation. Last year's enpenditures were:

TABLE XVI

COST OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT, STOCKBRIDGE

EXPENSES			
Salary and travel of instructor	$2,750.00		
Supplies and books	66.40	$2,816.40	
RECEIPTS ON BEHALF OF THE DEPARTMENT			
Tuition of pupils from other towns	$ 462.50		
Smith-Hughes reimbursement on salary of instructor	387.34		
State reimbursement for Vocational Agriculture	1,505.10	2,354.94	$461.46*

*Net cost to Town of Stockbridge.

The net-cost figure has seldom run higher than $750 in the years of my tenure. However that may be, it is not a good argument to maintain a service, however inexpensive to the town, if that service is not effective in achieving its main purpose, which is to educate and establish young men in the business of farming. So far we have not had attractive opportunities for young men in Stockbridge. We have had success with boys from other towns where farms are available.

In order to present a picture of the town finances, which influence school appropriations, and which might have an effect on the continuation of vocational agriculture in the school, I present this tabulation, taken from the Assessors' Reports and the Town Reports.

TABLE XVII

TOWN OF STOCKBRIDGE DATA AFFECTING TOWN AND SCHOOL FINANCES

Assessed Valuations in Thousands of Dollars

	Land	Buildings	Total Real Estate	Personal	Total Estate	Raised by Taxes	Tax Rate	School Appropriation
1944	998	2,462	3,460	661	4,121	107	$26.00	$51,700
1940	1,014	2,565	3,579	619	4,198	124	29.60	49,727
1935	1,091	2,901	3,992	643	4,635	148	31.60	43,575
1930	1,420	3,493	4,913	691	5,604	126	22.20	45,000
1925	1,467	3,215	4,682	748	5,430	142	26.00	39,175
1920	1,539	3,434	4,973	773	5,746	114	19.50	33,350
1915	1,101	2,307	3,408	1,110	4,518	90	19.60	21,397
1910	1,051	2,025	3,076	990	4,066	60	14.50	18,547
1905	960	1,764	2,724	812	3,536	49	13.50	11,800
1900	951	1,522	2,474	823	3,296	53	15.90	
1895	944	1,358	2,302	752	3,054	36	11.50	
1890	872	1,044	1,916	849	2,763	29	10.10	
1885		*	1,439	984	2,422	27	10.80	
1880			1,193	985	2,177	24	10.50	
1875			1,368	1,252	2,620	25	9.00	
1870			991	1,073	2,064	14	6.40	
1865			757	903	1,660	15	8.50	

*Not listed separately before 1890.

This table shows the increase in assessments from $1,660,000, in 1865, to $5,746,000, in 1920. This valuation was maintained until after the stock-market crash and the depression of the early 1930's. In 1932 the assessors wrote down real estate valuations by $1,000,000. Since

1935 the decline in valuation has continued as more and more estates have gone into the hands of schools, or have been sold at prices below assessed valuations, and have then been re-assessed. This process continues. No new building of consequence has been done in twenty years. Because the town is entirely resort and residential, there is a heavy portion of assessment on buildings. Most of the buildings with high valuations have been the mansions on estates. Frankly, they are not worth the assessed valuation, so they are bound to be devalued further. This, then, is one aspect of the problem - a shrinking valuation on the large estates seems destined to continue.

At the same time that high assessments were being built up on the estates, the valuations on small homes were kept low. Thus it was possible to finance town government expenses without a large levy on the small home-owners of the town. A low tax rate has always been a great talking point with the town-fathers. It is supposed to attract people to live in town. The effect of the taxing policy has been to allow the local home-owners to vote town expenditures without feeling an equitable share of the tax burden. So the Town Meeting votes large expenditures each year, some of which are unnecessary. This program will come to a halt soon, for the tax base is shrinking, and a revaluation of large properties seems indicated. If revaluation occurs on large properties, it will occur on all properties, both small and large. The small home-owners will have to carry a much heavier load. When that time comes, every item voted in Town Meeting will be scrutinized by the people who will themselves be carrying the tax burden. Then the schools will be hit hardest, because the school budget is the largest single item in the town warrant. There is the weakness of the position of our department of vocational agriculture.

STATE AND FEDERAL AID. There is a possibility that the town will have to raise less of its total expenditures by taxation. This is due to increased aid from state and federal sources. Since 1925 the decrease in amounts raised by taxation has just about kept pace with the decrease in assessed valuation. In fact, the tax rate was $26.00 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation in both 1925 and 1944. In all future reports of the vocational agriculture department the state and federal financing should be emphasized, if the department is to be continued.

Since 1900 the school appropriation has risen from $11,800 to $51,700 in 1940. In 1944 the total reimbursements from all sources to the town, on behalf of education, were $11,752.13. This leaves a sum of $39,947.87 as the share paid by the town. All of these sources of income will continue as long as the school program continues as it is now.

There are several possibilities for improving the financial condition of the town which occur to me. First, the assessors should adopt a realistic policy in the valuation of all property. As market conditions are now, the small homes are undervalued, the large estates are overvalued. The assessment on personal property could be increased considerably without being burdensome. These things could be done with the existing list of property now in town.

The town might even take over some of the estates that come on the market, and develop these as residential areas. There is a definite demand for single-family houses of moderate size and good surroundings. There is plenty of land here for development, and such housing should attract added population.

Another possibility is to encourage industry to come to town and take advantage of our natural opportunities. The water power of the Housatonic, coupled with the railroad service, might prove worthwhile to

some manufacturer. If manufacturing were to come, housing would follow, and the tax base would expand. At one time the town had a woolen mill, a cotton mill, a paper-pulp mill, a shoddy mill, a tannery, a chair factory, and various small grist mills, sawmills, and other small industries. All left before 1900. Why? I don't know!

I am informed, by several people who have lived here much longer than I, and who have studied the town's history, that it has been a standard policy among the estate-owners to object strongly when any factory has suggested coming here. These people have maintained the attitude that industry would spoil the town for residential purposes. At the same time the estates have employed labor only seasonally. This discourages working people from living here. The result is a shrinking population. Now, with the closing of many estates, there must be a change of policy, if the town government is to be able to carry on its functions, on a sound financial basis. As I see it, there is not going to be a very wealthy class of people in the post-war world - there will be no group of people to operate the old big estates. If these properties can be opened for building purposes, they will supply the demand for small homes in desirable settings. If manufacturing could be induced to come here and employ two to five hundred hands, these homes would be permanent, rather than seasonal homes.

The possible attractions for factories are the water power of the Housatonic River, the water-power rights at the outlet of Stockbridge Bowl, railroad service, and a country location. Henry Ford has done much with small sub-assembly plants scattered through the countryside. Such small plants contribute greatly to the stability of the community, and do not necessarily injure its residential qualities.

It has been the purpose of this study to determine whether it is

worthwhile for Williams High School to continue the department of vocational agriculture, or to use its appropriation in some productive manner.

MY CONCLUSIONS

1. The Town of Stockbridge is a resort town with extremely high valuations placed on land and buildings, which are included in farm property.

2. These high valuations make it very difficult for young men to become established in farming in the town.

3. The soil, climate, elevation, and market conditions are conducive to dairy and poultry production.

4. In West Stockbridge, and other surrounding towns, save Lenox, land values are not a barrier to young men in becoming established in farming.

5. The high valuations of real estate in Stockbridge, which were developed before 1910 during the boom period of the great estates, are a barrier.

6. Since 1930 these properties have been devalued, but not enough to make them attractive for farming purposes.

7. With the devaluation of estates, the Town of Stockbridge is faced with a shrinking tax base.

8. A shrinking tax base leads to a search for new sources of revenue, which will be state and federal assistance, increases in assessments on smaller homes, increased assessments on personal property.

9. When this increased assessment falls on the small property owners, then, there will be a careful attitude among the voters at Town Meeting, for they will be carrying the load.

10. When town expenditures are cut, school expenditures are cut hardest; therefore, any unnecessary school expenditure will be stopped.

11. The department of vocational agriculture serves the town as a source of technical information, a labor-placement service, a repair shop,

a trainer of gardeners and farm workers. It serves West Stockbridge better than Stockbridge, and other towns which send bona fide agricultural boys here as well.

12. The question requiring an answer is: "Do the benefits to Stockbridge and its school system justify the expense?" Benefits resulting from the department are: (a) Longer continuance of boys in school, (b) a larger variety of courses offered, (c) provision of a type of vocational work in a school which had none previously, (d) some increase in enrollment, due to students coming from outside the Towns of Stockbridge and West Stockbridge, (e) work that can be done in the shop, (f) the garden services built up during the war, (g) courses offered through the connections of the department with the State Department of Education.

Criticisms of the department that counteract some of the benefits are: (a) the very poor chance for boys becoming farmers in town, (b) the small number of students, (c) the small prospect of increased enrollment, (d) the cost of maintenance.

The cost of maintenance is not burdensome on the Town of Stockbridge. It ranges from $450 to $750 per year. The balance is paid from state and federal funds, but these should be spent where they can show best results.

13. No department of vocational agriculture should ever be established without an exhaustive study of its prospects. This one apparently had no such preliminary study.

14. The department can be continued if the enrollment from outside Stockbridge and West Stockbridge can be increased to bring a total of 15 to 20 students. This would be a good group, and no criticism of expenditures would be justified.

15. This increased enrollment depends on the cooperation of school administrators outside our school system, which is not a certainty.

16. To improve public understanding of department finances, all future reports should show the net cost to the town.

17. To increase the enrollment from surrounding towns, the instructor and superintendent should be constantly alert for prospective students.

18. A program of regular publicity should be followed, to keep the possibilities of the department before the public.

19. There should be a program to get the land of big estates back into production. A five- or ten-year lease would help young men to become established in farming.

20. This study has taught me more about the town than I believed I would ever know. Possibly I will be a better teacher for it, though maybe not a teacher of agriculture.

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